

MEDIASCAN TRANSCRIPT  
CBS FACE THE NATION  
24 July, 1983  
Sunday

HERMAN: Sen. Moynihan, the United States is going to conduct some military maneuvers off the coast and around Nicaragua and El Salvador, the administration is asking for more military advisers to go to El Salvador and to accompany Salvadoran troops into the field. Does this have a worrisome familiar ring to you? Are we putting ourselves where we can have another incident, another Gulf of Tonkin and be started down a road towards actual war on our part? MOYNIHAN: That surely reminds me of that remark of Santyanna that 'fanatacism consists of redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim.'

From CBS News, Washington. A spontaneous and unrehearsed news interview on Face the Nation, with Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York and vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Sen. Moynihan will be questioned by CBS News congressional correspondent Phil Jones, by Lars Eric Nelson, diplomatic correspondent for the New York Daily News, and by the moderator, CBS News correspondent George Herman. Face the Nation is produced by CBS News which is solely responsible for the selection of today's guest and panel.

HERMAN: Sen. Moynihan, let me bring the subject around from Santyanna to Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Is it your feeling, having been in and out of Washington, in and out for many, many years, that this military increased pressure around Nicaragua and El Salvador by the United States, maneuvers, more military advisers, that this is something risky because of our presence there, that there could be incidents that could lead us to become involved in the fighting? MOYNIHAN: What is risky, George, would be, to my mind, two things. First, we don't have a policy, or if we had one, we've forgotten what it is and the president is appointing a commission to tell him what it ought to be. Before the commission's even met he's sending off the ranger and he's talking, the Pentagon's talking about more military advisers, and we're going to go into Honduras, we're going to do that and this. All of which is, alarms the world because it comes from an administration that doesn't seem to want any friends in the region even where we have them, as Mexico, Venezuela, Panama. Thank God, Panama is our friend. Can you imagine what it would be had the present administration had its way in those treaties, the Panama Canal treaties never been ratified. The second problem is that there seems so little sense of what is connected to what. The decisions about Nicaragua are made in Moscow to the degree that they concern us. They are the patrons of Cuba. They pay for Cuban soldiers. They have them in Ethiopia. They have them in Angola. They'll have them in Nicaragua if they think it serves the Soviet interest. It is only to the degrees the Soviets want to distract us in the region that this is happening, beginning and we are being wonderfully distracted. But what are we doing to persuade the Soviets not to do this? We are busily at this moment in Paris negotiating a long-term wheat agreement to feed their army. We are busily persuading ourselves that their, their procounsel Gen. Jaruzelski has done something extraordinary by letting out of jail people who never should have been imprisoned in the first place. And so we are saying we're going to remove sanctions which is in fact a form of restoring privileges. We are going to let them not pay their bills, let them go on being the worst tyranny, having crushed the first popular movement in the history of the Soviet world.

NELSON: Senator, the pretext for our increasing involvement in Central America is

the notion the Nicaraguans, backed by the Cubans, backed by the Russians, are exporting revolution to El Salvador. Do you think that that is the case? That that is the justification for our presence or are we in Central America simply to try to drive the Nicaraguans back into some form of government that's more acceptable to us? MOYNIHAN: We are both, and we are neither, and as you listen to the administration officials either publicly or in private councils, one day it's one, and the next day it's the other, and then sometimes they seemed to have forgotten which. There is no question that the Nicaraguan, Sandinista group betrayed their revolution. That was a legitimate revolution. It was filled with genuine democrats, small 'd' democrats, liberals as we would think of them, people who would want a society like Costa Rica has, as we would hope most countries would have. They were betrayed. The Marxist-Leninists do it all the time, and it was perhaps predictable, but in any event, it happened. And then they started talking about a revolution without boundaries. Well, that was the Cuban influence, and the Cuban influence was the result of Soviet direction. Did they start the insurgency in El Salvador? No, they did not. Do they direct it and help it? Yes, they do. Would it continue without them? Not as well. But is it something that we have the power to control? I don't think so. We've made...

HERMAN: Do we influence? MOYNIHAN: To influence yes. But let's be clear what the government itself knows, our government. First of all, it took two years and a quarter before the administration formally addressed this question. The president came to Congress. In the meantime, those on the intelligence committees had to watch this growing involvement which each quarter there would be a different explanation for. But in fact, we sponsored an invasion of Nicaragua and in fact after, a year after the invasion has begun, we inside the government.... The judgement has been made it has not succeeded and will not succeed. Mr. Nelson is the bureau chief of the New York Daily News. Last Tuesday you ran a story on your second page, where it belonged, says 'CIA Flops in Nicaragua,' and you had long interviews with officials of the government in which they told you what is their view, that they cannot influence events in Managua. They can roam around the jungles of Norva Scovia\* and such like to no consequence. Now if you have already made that judgement internally, what is all this business about? Why aren't we talking to Moscow, at minimum to Havana, when that is where the problem arises?

JONES: Senator, with all due respect and maybe you answered this, but I lost it totally. Do you believe that the United States should increase its advisers to that region to 125, and do you believe that these military maneuvers that are now in progress are necessary? MOYNIHAN: I do not believe we should increase our military advisers in El Salvador. I do not believe the military exercises are necessary. On the other hand, we have every right to be in the Caribbean.

HERMAN: Are they well advised? MOYNIHAN: I don't know that they do any harm. I mean, it should be reminded we do have a (inaudible). The Chinese can have maneuvers in the Caribbean too.

JONES: So you do not favor these two events now? Do you think we ought to talk to the Russians? Now just what would Mr. Moynihan say to the Russians? MOYNIHAN: Stop it. Stop sending arms to Nicaragua. Tell the Nicaraguans to get to the headquarters of the El Salvador insurgents out of Managua. Don't even think about sending MIGs from Cuba to Nicaragua. Get those Nicaraguans out of Bulgaria where they are training to fly those MIGs, and do that or else feed yourselves for the next 10 years and find a way to pay for a bankrupt Poland and as many other unpleasant things as we can imagine.

JONES: Slap an embargo on them immediately on wheat. You're talking about (inaudible) to sell wheat. MOYNIHAN: Yes.

JONES: So you favor an embargo on wheat. MOYNIHAN: I certainly do. They have it within their powers not to stop the rhetoric in Managua, but to stop any serious military threat to the region. And we have the power in return (inaudible) to stop an invasion which we, which has not succeeded and was not...

JONES: That rhetoric sounds tough too. Do you think that would work? MOYNIHAN: I'd find out. I'd find out before we started acting like we mean to go to war in Central America, which there is no need to do, no reason for doing. You asked me about the military advisers. We started out to help El Salvador solve a problem, which in the end only they can solve, and they have not shown any very great enthusiasm for doing that. We had President Magana here a few months ago. We had him to lunch at the Senate. He spoke a bit in Spanish, a nice man, and a question arose, and as I recall, I was the first person to ask a question. I said what has been done to proceed with the trials of the men who are accused of having murdered, having first raped and then murdered two American nuns and two American religious leaders in December 1980, oh, 2 years ago? 'Oh,' he said, 'these things are complicated.' Well, no doubt they are complicated, but if they want the United States to help them, they'll uncomplicate them fast. They haven't done that.

HERMAN: Let me ask you to answer a question which you posed yourself earlier on. You said, 'Why are we not talking to Moscow and to Havana?' And I would ask you to answer that question. Why is this administration not talking to Moscow and Havana in your opinion? MOYNIHAN: Because it has very little experience of that kind of high level diplomacy and almost shys away from it. I've begun to get the sense that the people in the administration are new to government in a curious way, national government, new to international affairs, and they don't sort of seem to know how. In addition to which, what would they say...

HERMAN: In that case, may I interrupt to ask you, Senator, do you welcome the introduction of Henry Kissinger into this government, as you say, of newcomers? MOYNIHAN: I certainly would have to say that it's a comment on the state of policy-making in the existing administration that they have to get a commission to think up what their policy is and tell them six months from now while we're having maneuvers...

JONES: But that was your good friend, respected colleague, Sen. Jackson, a Democrat and on the House side Mr. Barnes, who is an outspoken critic of U.S. policy. These two outstanding men were out front on suggesting a commission. Why would you condemn it? MOYNIHAN: I'm not condemning it. I'm just saying it is.... I suspect they had the same thing in mind that I had. The administration does not seem able to create a policy on its own. Perhaps if they got some outside advice.... But you don't have great foreign policy by commissions. If you have a policy that you want a commission to endorse, then that can be useful for you.

JONES: Is that what's happened here? MOYNIHAN: No, I don't think so.

JONES: Sen. Byrd suggested this week on the floor that it was a smokescreen. MOYNIHAN: I would like to think there was that kind of level, but listen. I refer you to the story in Mr. Nelson's newspaper, the Daily News, on Tuesday. They have internally decided the policy was not working and they had to have a substitute.

NELSON: They had decided that, but last Monday the president made a speech in Hollywood, Fla., where he accused the Soviet Union and Cuba of committing the first real Communist aggression on the American mainland. MOYNIHAN: Yes.

NELSON: Those words coming from a United States president at a time when we have a commission to report in six months, battleships and the carriers off the coast suggests that we could find ourselves in something much deeper than we are now. Do you think that is likely? MOYNIHAN: I wish I knew whether the president used that word conscious that it is a term from the Rio Treaty of 1947. I don't know. I'm not sure he remembers the Rio Treaty, or if his speech writers, in any event, do. We are a Caribbean nation. It's not unusual for us to have forces in that part of the world. Look at Key West. Look at Puerto Rico. Look at St. Thomas. What worries me is that we are going to get ourselves involved in escalating, step-at-a-time disputes with the people who do not have the power to respond to us.

HERMAN: But Senator, you baffle me. It seems to me in a debate or discussion with Dr. Kissinger -- it was printed in the Public Opinion magazine -- you said that Central America was the most proximate crisis. You said that you're not sure that the president has asked for enough money for aid to El Salvador. You said the administration doesn't seem to have a strong sense of the situation on the ground there and that no case could be made for Congress cutting down the aid to El Salvador and Central America as it has done, the aid that the president has asked for. You want more aid, but you don't want advisers. Straighten me out on what your, the Moynihan policy is. MOYNIHAN: George, I said that a case could be made for providing no aid to El Salvador. A case could be made...

HERMAN: But you said that in your own opinion you weren't sure the president asked for enough. MOYNIHAN: I think that's right, in terms of economic aid. I think in that specific statement I said no case could be made for providing 45%. I think more economic aid would be in order, more military aid and more military advisers. No. Congress won't have it. American people did not believe in it and you, and the army has done something rather extraordinary. They're fighting with the Chief of Staff Gen. Myers, just as he was retiring and betting right across the high command in the army and they said, they are saying don't send us to fight a war the American people do not support.

HERMAN: Let me just say that in your advice that we should settle this really by talking to the Russians. If we can't manage that, we should talk to the Cubans, but in any case, you thought we should talk to the Russians. In that sort of face-off, poker game, whatever you want to call it, between the Reagan administration and the Andropov administration, is the MX part of a bargaining chip? Is the missile situation part? You talked about a wheat embargo. It seemed to me the wheat embargo didn't work too well the last time we tried it. What is the power, the mix that we have to advocate and does it include the MX missile? MOYNIHAN: It ought not to include the MX missile. Now we're moving to a much higher, more serious issue. This Tuesday the Senate is going to vote on the authorizing funds to build and deploy in Minuteman silos, the MX missile. This means we will be moving to a first-strike position with respect to the Soviets. It doesn't matter what we say. It is what they perceive. We will be.... We have.... If you recall, it was under.... Well, I was in the Cabinet at the time that the Minuteman missiles and we began to see the Soviets developing these huge land-based SS-18s and 19s and we knew that the Minuteman would become vulnerable. So we set up in 1972 to build a new missile that could be deployed in a way that it would be consistent with deterrence. Our doctrine from the time of President Eisenhower has been we would never start a nuclear war, but if we were, if

someone else did, we would have reserves to strike back that second strike and so powerfully that no rational nation would ever strike first. However, by putting these missiles, after 13 years wandering in the desert, the mind boggles. We're going to put them right back in the silos which, because they had become vulnerable, we decided we had to get out of and move somewhere else. That means the Soviets.... They know. They have those silos targeted, two warheads for every one. They know that we, either in a crisis, to use the phrase military, you use them or lose them. That means that each side will be looking at each other to find which is the fastest gun in the West or the East. Thirty minutes to decide whether the other side is going to launch. In fact, in terms of your evidence, you pick up your first radars at launch plus 10, your second confirmed at launch plus 20, and then you have nine minutes to decide whether to strike yourself. It is, it puts the world on a hair trigger. It's immoral. It is potentially ruinous. I mean, ultimately and finally ruinous.

JONES: You are, you are clearly against the big MX. MOYNIHAN: Yes.

JONES: But you are on the Intelligence Committee of this Senate. Based on what you know about what the Soviets are up to, must the United States move just to the Midgetman missile and move quickly? MOYNIHAN: Yes. That is one of the interesting things. The deployment of this vast ICBM in a fixed mode has been described by Leon \*Weezeltear very well as the Sovietization of American strategy. We are beginning to do what they do. Did, rather. Just the time when they are moving away. They are developing two missiles now, the SSX-24 and the PL-5. We call PL for \*placets which is a firing range they have. They are mobile. They can be moved around. They are not vulnerable to a first strike. The Skowcroft Commission very properly said we should do the same thing. There will be a vote on the amendment on Tuesday that I will submit that says, takes the funds away for deploying the MX and puts them into developing the Midgetman. The interesting point, you can have more stability with more weapons if they are one single warhead and dispersed.

NELSON: Your alternative, Senator, though, is going to cost about \$70 billion according to one estimate. Now what's going to happen when the Congress finds out that this kind of stability is going to cost them \$70 billion as opposed to \$20 billion for the MX? MOYNIHAN: I haven't heard that figure \$70 billion, and I can't say why it would be the case. These are relatively simple missiles to develop. We know how to do it. The Pershing is almost the prototype and we have that in production.

NELSON: The Pershing will be 108, this will be 1,000. MOYNIHAN: I don't care what it costs if we move back from the edge of nuclear encounter. And we are getting closer all the time.

HERMAN: If we go to talk.... If the Reagan administration, on behalf of the United States, goes to Moscow to talk to the Russians about straightening out all these problems, whom do they talk to? Is Mr. Andropov in firm control? You're on the Intelligence Committee. You're the ranking Democrat, the vice chairman. Is his health good? Can we negotiate with him? Is he ready? MOYNIHAN: He, he has surprised everybody by how quickly he took power. The Soviet system is different. It's almost the opposite of ours. Our presidents come in very strong and gradually lose strength. It's the other way with close struggle, harmony emerges. Brezhnev for example, took office in 1964.

HERMAN: Time is running out. Let's get to Andropov. MOYNIHAN: Did not move into Stalin's office until 1972. Andropov has not moved into Stalin's office yet. We watch

this very closely. But he clearly is in control. \*Chernenko, the second in command, about two weeks ago stopped talking about collective leadership. Andropov is the man to deal with, and his health is perfectly capable, perfectly adequate for negotiations if we offer him something he wants or offer to deny him something he needs, and that is where we should be concentrating our attention and not flailing around in the jungles of Central America with no success. Two years has shown no success.

JONES: Back to the jungles of South America. Are you convinced that the Reagan administration is trying to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua?

MOYNIHAN: I am convinced it is trying to do so, but its internal document says, the Daily News report states that it is not possible to do so with the resources that have been committed. That's a definition of failed policy. That's what I started out by saying 'fanaticism consists of redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim.'

JONES: Well, what should Congress do to prevent this policy then? MOYNIHAN: I think Congress has in effect done.... It is certainly going to say the covert invasion is about as covert as the Yankee Stadium, has got to stop.

JONES: The Senate Intelligence Committee didn't say that though. MOYNIHAN: It has said you come back to us with a new finding before you...

JONES: After you get done.

HERMAN: And I say we've run out of time. Thank you very much, Sen. Moynihan, for being with us on Face the Nation.

MOYNIHAN: Thank you, George.

Carol Lamb, Transcriber